FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER

"For a world united in prayer"

Volume XXIV, Number 4, August 1973

FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER

Founded by Carl Allison Evans (1880-1956)

Our purpose: To promote the practice of prayer among all religious faiths whose fundamental belief is in God, regardless of race, creed, or color, and whose tenets include the universal attributes of truth, honesty, justice and mercy, that thereby there may arise a closer relation to Almighty God and a deeper spirit of fellowship among mankind.

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HUMAN SUFFERING

I MAY very well be wrong in my impression that people exist who have not had to earn their spiritual lives by means of suffering. It is difficult if not impossible to know enough about a person to be able to make such a judgment on such a matter with any certainty. My impression—which is strong—could easily be nothing but the blindness that customarily accompanies suffering and is indeed one sure symptom of the self-centeredness that seems to be both its cause and its effect.

Suffering is not the style any more. These days, we seem to regard wretchedness of the mind or the emotions or spirit as a disease that we ought not to have caught in the first place and now that we have it we ought to shut up about and try to doctor with either a pill or a placebo or will-power ("which will cure anything if it's strong enough") and even if it hurts we ought to forget and act as if everything were swell. To know that we suffering, however, just to put the word to it, offers dignity to our sufferings, makes us less anxious to apologize for them, helps others to see us as something worthier than another neuro, fool, or case. To see a human being as a sufferer (and we do suffer excruciatingly from the neuroses we refuse to let go of, and from our foolishness, and from our tedious way of going on and on about this or that) is to offer him or her or oneself the sympathy that we can't work up for a case. All suffering, it seems to me, is the result of our fallibility, our dislike of it, our disgust at it, our despair because of it; and we can never be wholly free of it as long as we are human beings confined to our imperfect skins, characters, and constitutions. All we can do is fight our fallibilities, pray without ceasing, enjoy those days when we are able to be serenely at one with our higher power, and endure as we can the majority of our days when we are back in the coils and moils of our miseries which, it is now clear, we are going to have to fight until our last day on earth.

Now that I am beginning to understand this about my own human nature, I am beginning to understand it about other individuals' human natures, which I don't tolerate or forgive quite

as easily. On days that I am occasionally blessed with now, when I enjoy a contentment as real as sunshine or some stillness of my soul which I know as well as I do the fragrance of certain flowers, I have found myself being obliged to notice that these days are not necessarily so balmy for others. I react to this discovery with irritation. A selfish reaction. Once I give some thought to it (for selfishness is one of my fallibilities and just like the rest of them it makes me uncomfortable as if I were obliged to rid myself of it as completely as though it were a splinter in my soul) I am discovering how to cope with it and change it. I extricate myself from that bubble of bliss in which I have been squatting like a connoisseur of all that's finest in the universe, in other words I step out of my self-centeredness, I take a good look at the intruder, and ten times out of ten I see that he has forced himself upon me because he is suffering and cannot endure it any longer without some help. Whereupon I offer him what I would want if I were in his shoes—some interest, first of all, that being an exceedingly rare ointment these days, and then some intelligent understanding, and such practical advice as I have available: in short, whatever help I can muster for his benefit. In doing this for him, I find more happiness than I ever did in my stillness, which amounts at best to safety and escape. This happiness does not have the poetry and beauty of stillness. But it does possess all the hard facts and painful feelings of reality, which is God, and not the least of these facts is my knowledge that when I am unserene and troubled again, perhaps by tonight, certainly by tomorrow, the person whose wretchedness I have been sharing will be there to help me with mine. In my stillness I was alone, but now I am not.

This sharing of strength and need is beginning to be a way of life for me. I seem to have joined a fellowship of friends. It resembles a family—so much so that I am able to comprehend why certain people I knew when I was a boy addressed one another as "Brother" or "Sister". It seemed awfully old-fashioned then, really kind of ridiculous, but now it seems wonderful to me, now that I realize we are all here and we are all suffering together. —P. G.

In 1964, Mrs. Lilly (right) entertained Miss Brown and Dr. Hung in her home.

RUTH ALLISON LILLY (1891-1973)

AFTER an illness of three weeks, Ruth Allison Lilly, of Indianapolis, Indiana, passed away on March 14. She was born on October 14, 1891, and was married to Eli Lilly on November 7, 1927.

Mrs. Lilly was a woman of great insight and breadth of vision. Her husband said of her, "In the many years of our marriage I have almost never made an important decision without consulting her views. I consider her a remarkable woman with God-given talents for clear analysis, penetrating insights, and wise judgments."

Mrs. Lilly had many interests and was a member of numerous organizations. She became interested in Fellowship in Prayer in 1950. "This," she said, "seems to me our greatest hope for the future and the only way possible to achieve friendship throughout the world." After the death of Carl Allison Evans, our founder, she wrote: "The progress of your organization during the past six years has seemed almost like a miracle, and I would not want to see it fail its dedicated purpose... I am glad to have a small part in what I believe to be the best hope for the future." Only recently publication of our new Course in Prayer has been made possible by her generosity. The world has been made a better place because of the life and works of Ruth Allison Lilly.

EXCERPTS FROM THE REPORT OF FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER OF NIGERIA

by John Akpan Imah

Calabar, S.E.S. Nigeria. Our annual prayer conference, which was held here from December 17 to 26, was well attended by a large number at each service. The Word was preached with the power and anointing of the Holy Spirit. Numerous souls were saved. Those who had worry and sickness found real rest and peace. Brother Daniel Uko, who has had severe trouble with his stomach, is healed. Sister Mercy Asugno Umo, who was so sick, is now better. Others followed the Lord in water baptism and some took part in the ordnance of the Lord's Supper. Praise the Lord. The church at Afala Iman, with Brother T. E. Obot, joined the Fellowship.

. . . . I am really happy to further report the continued increase and progress in activities of the newly-formed Fellowship. God is blessing. There is increase in Sunday worship-services, especially in prayer meetings. Sunday noon Fellowship study-class well attended. Women's meeting and Men's Association are very encouraging. Wednesday night devotional service, prayers, and exercise of spiritual gifts. Thursday fasting and prayer for Divine healing as we seek His will be done. Our faithful volunteer co-workers and young people in FIP Bible Institute are more active in church and in speaking in the open-air preaching in the town and in the surrounding villages. The work is extended with a spirit of unity among our prayer-groups.

. . . . This week we are at Mbioto Village, going forth from house to house, visiting the sick, praying with them and the suffering ones, distributing the FIP materials, dealing with the lost and the reaching of the non-church-goers. Many people we have

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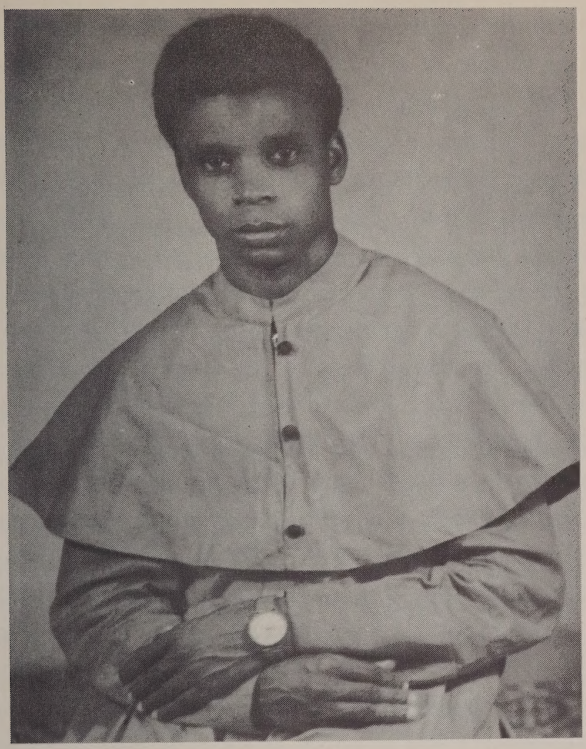

JOHN AKPAN IMAH

Foreign Zone Advisor from Calabar, S.E.S. Nigeria

"I WAS born in Mbioto No. I, Nigeria," *he writes*, "and I was brought up in a Christian home. I accepted Christ into my heart as Saviour in 1957. Immediately after my conversion, my life was changed that God began using me in Divine healing and gospel work. I began to exercise the ministry of praying for the sick and preaching more and more, and numerous folks were healed. . . .

"While praying for the sick, I was studying my Bible,

praying together day and night, and witnessing for the gospel of Christ. The Lord led me to call for a three-day prayer-meeting. Spirit-filled people from different denominations met in the home of one of our members, and we started praying longer and fasting for three days without food. We had the best results and there was a great power of God's Spirit with gifts of healing.

"In 1964, during seven days of prayer and fasting, the Holy Spirit's voice was so clear I began to pray really in earnest, and I have had some difficulty in praying. Just as the Prophet Isaiah of the Old Testament said, "Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send and who will go for us? Then said, Here am I; send me," so I had a call to serve as Pastor/Prophet. But my relatives began weeping for I just completed my High School or College training, and as a posthumous I had no helper or financial assistants and my friends criticized me because I had given my life to serve God. However, I obeyed and started preaching, praying for the sick, and organizing a mission work.

"In the same year I was officially appointed Superintendent in our churches. I had a group of praying men then known as The School of Minor Prophets, and took them with me while visiting from house to house, from village to village, holding evangelistic healing campaigns and public prayers to help meet the spiritual needs of our African brethren, especially the Nigerians, because our people are hungry for spiritual truth and have no opportunity to hear the gospel. I started to pastor and formed prayer groups at Mbioto, Anan, Nung A Sang, Ikono, Asuna, and other places throughout the area.

"Fellowship work started. Our Nigerian Fellowship has sought to serve churches and to cooperate with them without being identified with any one denomination or group of churches. Because our Seals have been of brotherhood and peace, our Fellowship has enjoyed the confidence and support of all Christian groups which find above all other things that *prayer is all-important.*

"Today I work with a large denomination. 'The fields are ripe unto the harvest.' "

REPORT FROM NIGERIA (Continued from page 4)

visited in this village give evidence of spiritual darkness and lack of spiritual knowledge. In some homes we find pagans offering sacrifices of goats and chickens to idols and juju shrines called "ekpo." Many chiefs and their families are being saved on these our visitations. I got some baptized. But pagans are still more in number than Christians here. We are praying that God will give us full-time missionaries.

. . . . Monthly meeting held in January at Ikot Ekan also proved a blessing. But we have trouble getting all our groups there who wanted to go.

. . . . The Lord's Supper was conducted at Mbioto No. I on Sunday, January 28. Brother James Imah led the Sunday school successfully on praying. John James was our music conductor. Godwin Okon read the Scripture Reading, I Corinthians 11: 23-30. The congregations jointly sang "Be Holy, Be Holy, Be Holy, For I Am Holy." After this, the Reverend John Akpan Imah conducted the Lord's Supper in John 6: 50-58. The sermon urged and enlighted participants to be like Him. There were approximately 1,600 in attendance.

. . . . February 3-4, we met at Afala Iman and prayed together with our sisters and brothers in their group.

We shall hold FIP meetings on March 29-31 and June 15-17. We are expecting God to give us days that will be of great value. Fellowship in Prayer (Nigeria) will hold its annual convention from September 7 to September 9. The three afternoon sessions will be filled with lectures dealing with prayer. . . .

THEY PRAY *Ray Allen Albert*

Serene
The silent stars move in their world
Of calm and quiet and pray
That on the earth
Is peace.

SISIN KWABO

by Johnson D. A. Kuewumi

(This vivid sketch of an old man in Nigeria, written by a much younger one, is printed here for the enjoyment of readers and also for their information about a way of life—of thinking and feeling—very different from ours. It was sent to us through the courtesy of Contributing Editor Carla Patsuris.)

MY first acquaintance with Sisin Kwabo, popularly known as Maigadi—or "Watchman"—was in June, 1947, and, to be frank, it is not a happy memory although by that mysterious something in human nature we later became friends, or, to be more exact, we became quite tolerant of each other.

It was soon after I took up my present post under the firm of X in Kano. I was perhaps too much engaged with the thought of my unattractive position at that time to take notice of Sisin Kwabo, who was then and until his death in 1952, except for a short vacation in the same year, the authoritative nightwatchman of the firm.

There was a heavy rain one morning and, as a longstanding habit of mine, I defied the elements and went to work at 8 A.M. as usual. It was rather cold, and the angry winds added to the misery of the many people who must risk everything to trek through the flooded streets to get to work. To my utter disappointment, the office was locked, and the compound was deserted. As I retraced my steps to find shelter anywhere nearby, Maigadi seized the unfavorable opportunity to rain abuses on me and called me all sorts of names without any provocation on my part.

I was indeed humiliated and wondered why a poor illiterate nightwatchman should openly display so much lack of respect for me. My experience in Northern Nigeria generally, and especially in the gold mines where I worked last before coming to Kano, was to expect unfailing albeit pretentious respect and obedience from

the natives. But Maigadi, in his own right, was different from the others. The only justification for his acerbity was that I trespassed by entering the premises without permission from him when he was still on duty. Huddled in his little cage by the gate, which hardly afforded him any protection from the fury of the elements, it was simply human for the watchman to be bitter that morning, so I held my peace and took his vituperations. I rather pitied him in his predicament, and that feeling of pity for him continued through the years we worked together.

From that day, I managed to compromise with him and never passed by without greeting him, a great honor from his point of view. The change in my position some months later seemed completely to disarm him. I had climbed into a responsible position in the office, and Maigadi had to come to me for his wages every Saturday. Although he would not yield a bit of his authority when dealing with the junior clerks and members of the public, he found that I was now in authority over him and whenever I was pleased to call him "Maigadi," his favorite title, his spontaneous response was "Rainka shi dade"—"May your life be prolonged," the Hausa greeting of respect to a superior. The Hausas believe by virtue of their religion that a man in authority has been so ordained by God and therefore must be respected. If the tide of fortune turns anytime, God has also been pleased to withdraw the honor and nobody is bothered.

On point of accuracy, Maigadi was not a Nigerian. His birthplace was somewhere in the French Sudan. Ask him where he came from, and he would not fail to tell you very impressively, "Gari mu da nisa"—"My or our town is far." About five feet four inches, black in complexion, he was of the African Arab stock and might have been sixty or sixty-five years old. The average illiterate African can never tell you his age, but if you are patient and converse long enough with him, you may form your own opinion of his age as he tells you of incidents that happened thirty, forty or more years ago. Maigadi was always evasive about when and why he migrated to Nigeria. All told, he had had more than thirty years' experience as a nightwatchman, having started in a European store when the Managing Director of X was then a salesman.

When the salesman resigned from the store to establish his own business some twenty-five years ago, it was just natural that Sisin Kwabo should quit too and join the new establishment as its first watchman, for it was not so much the remuneration that mattered with him as the satisfaction of working for a man who had known him for long and, so he thought at least, could appreciate his worth. Like the mystery shrouding his migration, I was not destined to know how he acquired his name of Sisin Kwabo, which simply means "Half-penny" in Hausa. His real Arabic name was Musa—"Moses" in Hebrew, but he must have picked up the appelation of Sisin Kwabo on his arrival in Nigeria years ago.

A disagreeable habit of Maigadi's was excessive drinking of "Pito" and "Burukutu"—two native drinks prepared from fermented guinea corn. Although he assured me times without number in the name of Allah, I found that he never gave up drinking. It must have contributed very largely to his longstanding illness, which eventually ended his life. I tried several times to appeal to his conscience by reminding him that his religion (Islam) forbade drinking. But he could not help regarding Mohammed's injunction in this particular as out of step with modern civilization.

Notwithstanding this evil habit, however, I found Maigadi's life very interesting if only for its primitiveness, which contrasted very sharply with ours. He asked for very little and owned very little of this world's good things. His personal possessions consisted of a double-edged knife almost always strapped to his left arm for defense, one or two pairs of canvas shoes (he was very fond of wearing them even when his feet were too swollen to be easily accomodated in them), an undergarment and a pair of shorts for daily use, and a white "baban riga" (big gown) and trousers to match, which he reserved for special occasions. He ate very little (he was very emaciated) and drank a lot. A game of cards was his favorite pasttime day and night. He slept very little, just between ten and eleven in the forenoon. Instead of resuming duty at 6 P.M., he would arrive at three or four in the afternoon, set up a display of a few packets of cigarets for sale on a small empty beer case, and from then remain at this post until nine the following morning.

His wages were increased to 10 /- (about one dollar and forty cents) a week after some twenty-five years of continual meritorious service, and it was a titanic struggle for him to reach that maximum. He fought so hard and so long for it that when he really got it his employers made sure it would not benefit him. It was pitiable to listen to this man of sorrows pouring out his grievances. There he was, with no knowledge of our modern profit-and-loss system, basing his claims on the number of years he had served the establishment. The business had expanded and progressed beyond expectations, but not this man. Whenever he dared to ask for consideration, the boss raved at him. Someone was always reminding him of his free quarters, the dingy hovel he was occupying, etc., etc. Everybody refused to consider the importance of his position. At last he could stomach it no longer. He quit the hovel, and it was then he received his maximum of 10 /- per week. He got it, but now he had nowhere to stay, and he resorted to sleeping in any available nook in the office in the daytime. Even then someone was always harassing him. It was too much for his dirty undernourished body.

Maigadi had a few tricks, however, to get some pence out of his superiors when he ran out of money. He would surprise everybody by declaring all of a sudden that he was resigning there and then. Or if it suited his fancy he would tell awful tales of struggles with imaginary thieves the night before We all knew what these stories meant, and the response never failed —three-pence, six-pence, or a shilling would clear the tense atmosphere.

The threat to go had been repeated so often that it no longer impressed anybody. Yet one day in 1952 Maigadi was actually gone. Some said it was a leave of absence. Others said he would never return. No news of his whereabouts until, after some weeks, he returned and came proudly to inform me, "Master, I have returned." I noticed a change in him. His health had improved during the short period he was away. He told me how he had enjoyed his stay at home but regretted that all his former comrades were dead and that was one strong reason why he found it necessary to return quickly. It was his first and only vacation for more than

thirty years.

It was not long after his return when the bitterest struggle started. It was not a fight for higher wages this time but a deadly struggle with sickness and misery. As a matter of fact, it had been quite a long time since Maigadi enjoyed good health. It ought to have surprised none of us—after the squalor he had subjected himself to for years. But somehow he managed to carry on until the clock of destiny brought him face to face with the inevitable end.

He rallied all his strength to no avail. Each succeeding day found him weaker and weaker, and his health was ebbing fast. I felt that his end was near and hoped in vain that death would make a quick business of him and relieve him with the minimum of delay. It was a painful lingering death, however. His legs and stomach swelled until he could eat practically nothing and was unable to move about.

One morning I found him lying down on the ground with his white canvas shoes near him. After I had inquired for his health, and all such formality, he asked me frankly if on looking at him I still thought he was a human being. This touched me, and I said nothing except some prayers for his recovery. (It is considered bad manners among the Hausas to express a pessimistic view about sick people. Allah is the only competent authority over the fate of humanity. Hence nobody may know whether or not a sick person will recover.)

Later Maigadi was removed to the hospital for treatment when his life was hanging on a thread. In the hospital, perhaps on the cleanest bed he ever slept on, on Saturday, September 20, 1952, his spirit finally took its flight. Sisin Kwabo was quickly forgotten.

Not to be unkind to an unkind world, that is greatness.

—A. E. Johnson

TWO LYRICS

From 'REVELATIONS'

by Rafael de las Casas

Now lately when
in the overblowing
sky, I see a
limousine of snow
and light a candle
where the sun
once stood—
I calm my soul
for whatever good, and say,
"I'm going out
and cut some wood."

For—
is it not like
the parable
of the fishes
and the loaves,
that
the sun never
has failed to rise. . .

nor has
the paradise
awaiting our souls
left us without
a brief revelation
or barred in any way—
our
hopeful passage.

ONE HYMN OF PRAISE

Emma S. McLaughlin

Come, kneel with me before the altar rail
Of earth, wind-carved, worn satin-smooth by time,
For day has come; the leaven of my joy
Has swelled my heart to bursting, with the sun.
I cannot keep a soul in human bonds
When all the world is washed by heaven's light,
When bird and tree and stone and blade of grass
Sing into being with the death of night.

Bow down with me, communing in this hour;
Accept creation's wonder, wrapped in gold
And shimmering with bows of butterflies —
Then light a candle worthy of the gift.
Thanksgiving wells within me; all my days
Shall be as one exultant hymn of praise.

SUMMER WOULD BE A LONELY PLACE

Emma S. McLaughlin

IT'S my turn! It's my turn! Give it to me!" The drowsy quiet of the summer afternoon was shattered by angry voices. We stood,

the carriage between us, grappling for possession of the doll.

"No! No! Give it to me! Give - it - to -"

There was a sudden ripping noise and then the heartbreaking sound of Rosie sobbing. I stood in shocked disbelief, staring at the ruffled bit of organdy in my hand—and the little jointed arm.

"Now look what you did," Rosie accused. "You broke my brand-new dolly. I'm never, ever, *ever* going to play with you again!" She grabbed the severed member from my hand and, clutching her maimed child to her breast, started for the gate.

"Don't go. I'm sorry," I cried, instantly contrite. "I only wanted to hold her. It was my *turn*, you know. I let you hold Cristobel. I didn't meant to break her. Don't be mad."

Rosie stopped midway to the gate and turned a blotched, tear-streaked face in my direction. "I'm not mad," she shouted, I'm not mad. I just don't want to play with you ever again." The last words clung to the still air. She flounced out of the yard, turned the corner of the alley without looking back, and was gone.

I sat down on the bottom step of the porch, sweaty and discomfited. It wasn't as if there had been only *one* doll. Cristobel still slept peacefully in her carriage. I reached over to smooth the patchwork quilt that covered her. Rosie would come back. We had quarreled before, and she always came back. Sometimes we couldn't even remember what had caused our anger.

Summer dragged by, and Rosie, true to her word, didn't come back. She had found a new friend. I was no longer necessary. Sometimes she would walk past the house, always with Elizabeth. When they saw me on the step, they would link arms and exchange whispers, giggling.

I trundled Cristobel in her carriage, played hopscotch with an imaginary playmate, and chased fireflies in the darkness. But summer was a lonely place without Rosie.

That time is gone now and reappears only out of the mist of memory, but I cannot help thinking, even today, of the wasted hours of that golden summer.

"I'm not mad. I just never, ever, *ever* want to play with you again." Childish words? Yes. Words spoken in hurt and

anger? Yes. But how often, as adults, we act in like manner.

I am reminded of a news item carried by the local paper. It told of a man shunned by his own family and the larger family of believers because his opinions sometimes differed from those of his church. His wife, once devoted, spoke only when it was absolutely necessary; the children and relatives ignored him. I thought how utterly rejected he must feel, alone and lonely.

What constitutes true forgiveness? How often shall we forgive those who have wronged us? When Peter approached Christ with this question, he asked, "Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?" Jesus said to him, "I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven." So we are admonished to forgive again and again and again—and yet again.

Being human, we are frail and prone to make mistakes. We give lip-service to our forgiveness, but our good intentions seldom penetrate the heart. We generously say, "Yes, I forgive you," then hold the one we have 'forgiven' at arms length, forever after rejecting his very selfhood, thereby rejecting God. We lock him out of the summer of the heart, deny him the pleasures of close association, shut and lock the gate on love. The days and the years of life pass by, unfulfilled. Yet when we come before God, asking that He forgive us, we expect not only forgiveness but that He take us back into the former relationship of love. We must be *assured* of this. How could we live, otherwise?

If we are trying to follow the example of Christ, forgiveness cannot be merely verbal; it must be accompanied by acts of acceptance and reinstatement. Without these, there can be no true forgiveness.

How great our rejection if we came to Him, saying, "Lord, Lord, forgive us for we have sinned," and He would reply, "Child, your sins are forgiven," and then, like an echo of Rosie's petulant voice, out of eternity He continued, "I just cannot share my love with you again." No matter how bright the day, there would be darkness, and the summer of the world would be forever a lonely place.

NEAR EVENING

R. D. MacKenzie

As I face evening, I think
of the day that has passed
like the morning
mist rising slowly
a spiral staircase in a sunbeam
weaving to a new level
yet gone so quick,
leaving a feeling that part of it —
this day past, was missed
and I wish I could
return
to the morning of my day;
when my morning face looked through the glass
as though waiting for me to paste it on
smiling like an angler with a champion bass
and waiting for me to take it and be gone,
when I spoke to my face
in the toiletry chest
through the glass where it sleeps
at night.

I wish
I could go back and start
it all again,
when we walked out the door into my day
my world, my face and I together still,
and see all the things I missed —
see all the things that were
fogged over and hidden:
seconds around corners
like rats or alleycats
waiting till I pass before
scuttling

or minutes under rocks
like slugs sliding away
from me.

Slugs
Which could have become
cocooned caterpillars
waiting to become
hour butterflies at the touch
of the right hand
and fly.

The first trip
I missed a lot of active butterflies
for fear of lifting
the wrong grey rocks,
only to watch them
crawling cocooning
off to fly
for someone else.

Now in this city life decays
to crumbling walls and brown
brown everywhere growing brown
death of flowers and shrubs and trees.
Within this city there's no open space
no place where green can green be long
where green can grow or green belong
and brown conquers all.
I've walked the streets of this city;
I've been and seen those crumbling walls;
I've written to warn of danger
but who has heard my calls?

I see evening flowing over the treetops
like a black cloud shaving aerosol
coming to straighten-stiffen

the greyed and softer beard
for the cutter
and it all seems so much
slower now
like the calm before.

I feel the chill of evening
fingers reaching
not grabbing but caressing
and inviting
me to come from this cool
dry-ice light that burns my eyes,
into the warm darkness ahead.

I wonder at the ways that my face greys
and pales.

A friend has come with a game board
to sit with me 'til evening comes

to teach me this game he brings
this new game he has which we play
while we wait together
for the comfort of evening
and later
another day to begin.

Evening is reaching out to wrap
its warm shawl of darkness around
us
so we can sit in comfort
with our new game
our new game
which we play while waiting
together for the comfort of the evening.

The clouds have foamed across the trees
and the fence and the garden and the grass

are dampening with dew,
drops everywhere,
and evening has reached
grey arms out to enfold us
like a mother with a suckling child.
Game over;
my friend asks
would I care to walk with him
into the evening,
home.

OF THE JEWISH HIGH HOLYDAYS

Samuel M. Silver

EVERY autumn the Jewish people observe what are known as the High Holydays. This is a period of ten days beginning (on September 27 this year) with Rosh Hashanah, which means New Year, and ending with Yom Kippur (October 6), the Day of Atonement.

The Jewish New Year has nothing to do with the calendar year. Jews regard January 1 as the beginning of the regular year, just as everyone else does.

The term, New Year, is used by Jews at this time to mean the new effort which they make to correct mistakes they may have made in the past. It is a new year of conscience, not the calendar.

Actually, the time when we get going all over again on duties and tasks suspended for the summer is the autumn. That's when school starts up, when organizations start their activities again. It is a more logical break in the year than January 1. When summer is over and the brisk breezes of fall begin to blow, the Jewish people take time out to try to stir themselves to improve the quality of their deeds.

They do this at worship-services in their synagogues. They recite prayers thanking God for giving men and women the power to tell right from wrong. They sit silently and think about the er-

rors they may have committed. They sing hymns in which the idea of forgiving others is emphasized. They listen to the rabbi who reminds them that believing in God means trying to make use of the powers for goodness and mercy which are deposited in all of us but which we sometimes neglect. They hearken to the Shofar, which is a ram's horn with a rousing sound designed to awaken the conscience that might be slumbering.

On the tenth day of this period of penitence, or repentance, there takes place the observance of the Day of Atonement.

As recommended in the Book of Leviticus (23), the Day of Atonement is a day of fasting. Fasting makes us uncomfortable, so it makes us think of the discomfort we may have brought to others by our thoughtlessness or negligence. As with all Jewish holydays, the observance of Yom Kippur begins in the evening. The worship-service then includes the singing of the hymn, Kol Nidre, which means All Vows, a plea for forgiveness for decisions made in haste and without regard for the feelings of others.

On Atonement Day, the worshipper thinks of his faults and tries to atone for them: that is, he realizes how wrong they were and makes up his mind not to repeat them. He tries hard also to feel forgiveness for those who have wronged him. The prayerbook, the songs, the sermons, the large gathering in the temple—all these lift him up to a new level of understanding and tenderness and give him a new sense of the sacredness of life.

These days are 'high'—that is, they lift the worshipper up in an effort to come closer to the Source of good conduct. They are holy, because nothing is more sacred than improving the relationship between people.

When the High Holydays are over, Jews wish one another a happy new year of the spirit. They say to one another, "Good Yomtov," which means Happy Holiday. Or, they say, "L'shawneh Tovah," which is Hebrew for Happy New Year.

Although the Jewish High Holydays are the most important religious occasion for the Jewish people, there is nothing about them which does not apply to all people. That is why one rabbi once told his congregation, the way that we can really *atone* is to strive to be *at one* with everyone.

THE RURAL JOURNAL

Estelle D. Broadrick

The sky is rose and amethyst, fading into a lilac that slowly deepens into a purple twilight haze. The soft lamplight shines on a bookshelf of assorted reading, poetry, biography, fiction, dusty and untouched.

She said the world was uncaring, cruel,
And life was a burden to bear.
She did not know why God kept her here,
Where no one seemed to care.
She was unaware of the beauty
That was all about her...
She whined, the world moves on
And does not care about her.
She did not see the loveliness
Of a tree-lined lane.
Her world was only small enough
For her wants and her pain.
The roses bloomed and faded,
The books grew dusty, unread.
She cried herself to sleep each night,
"For no one cares," she said.

A cardinal flew across her garden and regarded her with bright eyes. A mockingbird sang a collection of songs he had stolen from other songbirds. A lilac bush was fragrant with deep purple blooms. She had no eyes to see anything but the darkness she created. She had no ears to hear above her moans. She lived a blind and senseless existence in a prison of her own making.

Time is a moss—Time's lovely moss, where grows the edelweiss of God. —*A. E. Johnson*

TALENTS

Minnie M. Bauer

A talent is a special natural ability, it is a God-given gift to mankind, of one or more aptitudes for doing something especially well. We note and are familiar with people of the past and present who possess one talent or more in large degree. There are the vocalists who filled the world with songs of faith, hope, and joy. The artists who brought out the beauty of nature, the grandeur of scenes. The sculptors who wrought great things. The poets who gave so much enjoyment to us by their visions of the beautiful side of living. The writers who set before the world all their knowledge and information, the events of all time portrayed. The scientists who fathom out the secrets of things. . . .

But did you ever note the common man who used his ability to a most useful end? The benefits he bestowed did not reach many but were blessings to those who received them.

My father came to this country as a poor emigrant from Germany and was one of the early pioneers of Nebraska. He had no formal schooling at all. But he had a keen sense of music and rhythm. Although he knew nothing of notes or time, he could make music. All he needed to do was listen intently to a piece of music in order to duplicate it on his accordion. He was a great source of inspiration and joy to the pioneers, for he was everywhere with his music box and his song; he sang well also. All his lifetime he cheered up everyone with his accordion and singing and later organ and piano music.

In the little rural town where I went to high school, there was a man known to all as Pat. He had come over from Ireland. He had always lived alone. He was always poor, never acquired anything. But he had an abundance of one thing —good will for his fellow man. In the morning as he came down the street he greeted everyone with "Top of the morning to you!" He went into the stores to greet people. When he was through, the whole town was cheered for the day.

In the same town lived a quiet, very reserved lady. She had the best home in the community and employed domestic help. She had one fine ability, a real art—that of baking. And how well she used that talent. Whenever a home had sickness or death or misfortune, she was sure to take to it a basket of her home-baked bread, rolls, pastries. I, as a teenager, walked along with her at times, carrying her basket for her to one of these poor homes, and I saw the thankfulness in a hard-working mother's eyes.

A woman once complained to me that she really did not know how to do one nice thing and she regretted it. She had raised a family and knew only menial tasks. In later years it was necessary for her to earn a living. She tried practical nursing, and she turned out to have unusual ability at it. She became a veritable angel of mercy. Doctors preferred her services to those of trained nurses.

A widow lady with two children was a very busy person, caring for and providing for her children. She had a very lovely singing voice and was the main vocalist in the church choir. She sang for all services, all weddings, all funerals. She was called upon to sing at civic affairs and social functions. She would never refuse and would never accept remuneration for her services. She said the good Lord gave her the voice, and she was going to repay Him by singing wherever and whenever she could.

So we should not complain if we do not have great talents and cannot do what others do. Even though not highly gifted, one should not stand by and do nothing about such talent as one has. For every ability is God-given and should be used well for the betterment of mankind.

Life like a sculptor hews away the self to leave the soul.

—A. E. Johnson

THE ANT MOVES THE MOUNTAIN GRAIN BY GRAIN

Max S. Barker

The air stirs the grass
blade by blade.
The breeze wakes the leaves
stem by stem.
The wind excites the trees
limb by limb.
The gale provokes the forest
glade by glade.
The storm moves the ant
undismayed.
The ant moves the mountain
grain by grain.

LABOR DAY

Marjorie Martin

Today is the day when the glowing fire of ambition
remains idle. America has stopped to rest.
The challenge and dreams through countless years
have brought forth soldiers at their best.
A homefront army strove for perfection and the will
to attain that goal through industry and skill.
Today! This is Labor Day...the dream lives, and none can forget
This is America...Old Glory, 'tis shining yet!
Throughout this day, into the soft glow of night
This giant land in faith is burning bright!

FOUND WANTING

A Short Story by Emily Sargeant Councilman

AS men count time, it was a long while ago that Zacchaeus grew up in Jericho at the crossroads of his world. But perhaps counting time is looking through the wrong end of the telescope. Turn the scope around. Focus it for your eyes and, as if it were today, see him. Make it an X-ray scope that sees closer than close-up.

No longer a child, Zacchaeus, wearing his usual mask of self-sufficiency that cannot hide the emptiness within his eyes, lives and works in the restless activity of Jericho. Pagan traders from the East, with their rich fabrics and rare spices, as well as pilgrims pressing toward the Jerusalem Temple at festival times, share the much-traveled Jericho Road. On their way, of necessity, they mingle with those who live and die here—a conquered, proud, religious people—the rich, the poor, beggars, thieves, the "righteous," the "sinners." Here they meet—to communicate, to clash. Or, passing by on the other side without seeing, do not meet at all. Jericho—a town between two seas, nearer to the stagnating Dead Sea to the south, its bordering wilderness perilous to man and beast, than to the far-north Galilean Sea, through which the the Jordan River flows.

Here, at the crossroads between the seas, Zacchaeus lives and works hard at his government job from early morning till long past the coming of night. So hard does he work that for long stretches he can forget his loneliness, his long-ago unanswered questions, his left-off searching in vain.

Past thirty now, Zacchaeus is called young by the old and old by the young. But what keeps a man young? Is it more than rebellion? Is it willingness to start alone, if need be, to build a bridge between persons? Is it keeping on with your questions no matter what? holding onto hope? searching for something or Someone Other? Or, is all this building and seeking and hoping and searching much more than a matter of years, more than youth,

more than age? When Zacchaeus stops to think about it, he feels old.

Questions must come before answers. And Zacchaeus used to have his questions. And questions. But what do you do when no one really hears what you ask all through the growing-up years and beyond? After awhile, when you are too old to be young and too young to be old, do all the questions lose their shape and melt into a blur of confusion locked up inside of you? And do you finally give up asking, leave off searching, and learn to wear a mask of self-sufficiency to hide the deep darkness of the empty room in the innermost part of you? Lost in the outside wilderness of the everyday grind, do you finally give up hoping?

If you ask the people of Jericho about Zacchaeus, they will tell you he is a rich man, although some might admit that he and his father before him worked hard and honestly for what they made. Some old-timers remember the days when, as a small boy, Zacchaeus worked beside his hard-driving father—worked in the fields just out of reach of the wilderness and in the market-place, where precious food was skillfully exchanged for precious coin. They will tell you that Zacchaeus, now that his father is dead, still works hard, but keeps to himself—that he has changed. They remember how he used to be...well...different from now. And they will shake their heads, turning away, and say, "Now, he's a tax-collector."

If you ask Zacchaeus about his job, he will answer civilly enough (wearing his mask): "Yes, I collect taxes. And yes, I know the people hate me for it. It's largely an emotional protest aimed at the system; but all of us who work with our conquerors are hit with it, too. And I can understand. I've learned to live with their hatred, even to do without friendship. I do my job lawfully. Why not? Laws must be obeyed until they are changed —even harsh laws imposed by a conquering power from without. Otherwise there is anarchy and violence, and everyone loses. Just because I collect taxes that the people see as unjust, they say I defraud them."

"Do you overcharge them?"

"I do not. Of course I am only human and make mistakes.

But I always try to make just decisions within the law and never harsh judgments unless I find someone is concealing fraud himself. Sometimes they hate me for my refusal to be unjust *in their favor*. Of course religion is a big part of it."

"Religion? How is that?"

"They say we should be governed by our own laws that have been administered for generations by our religious leaders. (Some of our laws, too, are harsh—unjust, as I see it. No matter.) The priests condemn me, call me a sinner for being a tax-collector. They accept my tithes but shun me in the synagogue, deny my person. It does not disturb me any more. I have my living to think of—the security of my family."

These things Zacchaeus will say to you. Wearing his mask, he will not speak of the darkness within himself, of the secret fear that his sin might be greater than they or he himself might think, of the emptiness that cannot always be denied. He will not speak of the loneliness of living behind his secure walls. Nor will he speak of the despair that increasingly threatens his comfortable life since he began to stifle his questions, abandon his search for Someone Other, give up trying to reach the poor with help for them as persons, not beggars—since he gave up trying to be accepted by the pious people and their exclusive God who appeared to care nothing for the poor and miserable if they were heathen, infidels, or sinners. Only the "righteous" of the chosen race seemed acceptable to this God.

If you asked Zacchaeus, "Do you still care about the poor?" he probably would answer with honesty and sadness, "I don't know. They're all so far outside of my life now. Except for business matters, I hardly see anyone, not even the few who used to be my friends. Friendship is not for the rich. Or for the sinner."

But he might go on, his mask slipping a bit, "It used to be different long ago when a few of us thought we could change the misery of the poor by action, protest, and later, from inside the system, by persuasion. But we finally gave up. I guess we failed one another as well as the poor."

"Does it still worry you—the misery of others?"

"I wonder. Sometimes, when I have time to think about it, perhaps. My work day is long and tedious, often exasperating, without a free moment for futile thoughts. After hours, I close my doors."

"What about charities?"

"Oh, I pay my share of the Temple charity fund—without asking anymore how it is to be used. Otherwise, except for the painful self-imposed duty of seeking out beggars each Sabbath Day for the purpose of giving them coins, I avoid like the plague the places where they usually sit by the roadside. The tossing of coins to beggars who grovel in gratitude still fills me with the same shame and outrage for myself and for them that I first feel as a boy growing up in this town. Such giving is either too much or too little."

"The beggars—how do they accept your coins now?"

"Oh, they hate me, too. I see it in the veiled eyes of those who can see and in the turning away from my presence, my very shadow, of the bodies of the blind. In those days long ago we were so sure there must be a way to help, to really help. But we didn't find it. I didn't. Maybe...maybe I am more blind than the beggars."

"What about God, Zacchaeus? Have you given up there?"

"Not quite," he will answer today because it is today and different from other days. No mask could hide today that sudden kindling of a spark in empty eyes.

But he will not tell you why today is different. Nor will tell you about the faint hope he has felt at moments ever since he first heard of the young Galilean teacher who is different—who *must* be different. They say this man calls God "Father" when he prays -- and has been known to break the Sabbath by healing a blind man, restoring to him his sight. Something in Zacchaeus knows that he needs to see this man more than any blind beggar does; that if he only can see the one who calls himself Son of God and Son of Man, his blurred questions and his lost searching will come alive again. Hope. Just barely, but hope.

His conscious mind does not tell Zacchaeus this. When

he stops to think, he sees only the dark emptiness stretching out to ever-deepening despair at the futility of living in his world. He does not dare to speak of hope even to himself. But from travelers he hears about Jesus of Nazareth, and he listens. He hears of this teacher's strange and different words that the common people hear gladly but that some of the religious condemn as blasphemy..."My Father and I—we are one." Some have said that in his hometown people even tried to kill him once because he said, "I am the one," after reading in the synagogue from the Book of Isaiah of One to come bringing bread for the hungry, sight for the blind, freedom for the prisoner.

Rumors. One cannot believe everything. But today, this day, Zacchaeus has another chance to see this man and, just possibly, to find out the truth for himself. Word had come that later in the day the Galilean will be among those crowds already thronging the Jericho Road on their way to the Temple at Jerusalem. It is almost time for the annual Feast of the Passover.

Suddenly terrified at the thought of being too late again (Zaccheaus has tried before to follow rumors of this man but never has found him) and propelled by the urgency of his hovering despair, he runs to the only place he knows on the Jericho Road where he might have a chance of seeing Jesus as he passes by—Jesus, who at this moment holds all the long-lost questions, all the forgotten searching of Zacchaeus's life.

Panting, breathless, Zacchaeus manages finally to push his way through the gathering noisy crowd of travelers already jostling one another, fighting for walking space, to the giant sycamore tree with overhanging branches. Quickly he climbs the tree to where he can hide behind thick foliage but see Jesus when he passes by—Jesus, now recognized as all the light and substance of his life so long denied.

But he is not hidden from Jesus. And Jesus does not pass by. Stopping beneath the tree and looking up into the open eyes of Zacchaeus, he calls him by name, "Zacchaeus, I've found you. Come down—I will stay at your house today."

And Zacchaeus comes down—down from his hiding place,

down on his knees in the dust of the road, suddenly knowing in the presence of Jesus with lightning swiftness but without spoken words, "I *am* a sinner." Suddenly praying, "God have mercy."

Jesus, without a word, takes his hand and lifts him up. They walk together, side by side in the center of the milling crowd. Zacchaeus knowing that *he* is the blind man restored to sight; *he* is the lost sheep that the good shepherd goes into the wilderness to find. He knows that the hunger and thirst unrecognized through all his famished life have brought him to this place, this person, to be filled.

In a way it is as if they are alone together, only Jesus and himself. It is as if the crowd—some pushing, yearning to see Jesus, and some pushing, murmuring against him, "He goes to be the guest of a sinner"—the crowd is no longer there because... Yes! Because Zacchaeus sees that he himself is the crowd: all of them that yearn or murmur, each one of them. And each one is himself, Zacchaeus, the sinner, before this man who has come to find and to save all the lost in the wilderness. Yes.

At last Zacchaeus can speak to the One who has found him even in that deepest room within him—that used-to-be-empty room now peopled with every man, now illumined with the light of..."Of God?" he asks wonderingly. "So near, the place for God—within me? All the while?"

At last Jesus speaks with words, "Within you, all the while. Our Father there will answer all your questions, Zacchaeus. Only learn to listen, accept. Begin there always."

Zacchaeus, wanting to ask about that room no longer dark and suddenly large enough to hold every man, "Can it be that large? Can it?" hears without words, the answer, "It can. For God is there."

Walking with Jesus, Zacchaeus strides, a new man. The old mask is no longer needed or tolerated; the old fears, uncertainties, guilts replaced by a humility that makes action inevitable.

Looking with new sight into the faces of the restless crowd, Zacchaeus speaks decisively, rapidly, to Jesus: "Lord, I'll begin by using half of all I have to help the poor, the dispossessed. And I'll find the ways (others will help me) to do it with respect for them as persons. From the rest of what I have I will try to find and repay four times over everyone I have ever overcharged. There I will begin at once."

More slowly, hesitating, he continues, "Lord, when that is done, will you...will you let me come...to Jerusalem, find you there,and...follow you wherever you go?"

Jesus answers him slowly but certainly, "Not...to Jerusalem, Zacchaeus—and not beyond Jerusalem where I must go now. But you have found me. Here at the crossroads where I have found you."

"Then," falters Zacchaeus, shattered by a devastating sense of impending loss, "then...will I never see you again... never again?"

Now Jesus' words fall like the gentleness of rain on waiting earth. "You will see me. On this crowded road, in your synagogue, at home. You will see me in every creature, every person —the haters and the hated, the same. You will feed me, clothe me, come to me in prison, reach out and touch me...."

Zacchaeus, spilling over his bewilderment, begins to ask, "But how? How can I..."

Jesus' answering smile is the tender strength of letting go.

Yes.

And Zacchaeus, surprised by the wonder of new sight within himself, by the miracle of the once-dark, empty room peopled now, illumined, whispers the answer, new-found, "With love. *With love!*"

Stitching moment to moment, nor dropping one, we make a cocoon of immortality. —A. E. Johnson

TOO NORTH FOR PECANS *Maryleona Berg*

Your pecan tree will never grow
This far north? I do not know
Why you would try a pecan tree.
Plant this elm, be just like me.

Dutch elm disease laid low her tree,
Much care and warmth mine got from me;
Hard to believe, but it is so
My want and warmth made pecans grow.

COMMUNION *Kelly Janes*

Friend
I said to him and he would not listen
But stood aloof with fear in his sad eyes
Come
I beckoned him and he would not approach
Becoming a statue of what he was
Look
I said to him and his eyes averted
To an empty corner across the room
Friend
I said and held out my hand to him
And his eyes brightened
Come
I beckoned and threw a true smile to him
And he moved to me
Look
I said to him and showed him friendship
And his smile was real

THE GLASSBLOWER

A Story by Eleanor Ebersole

A glassblower worked day after day in the window of his little craft shop. He blew hot melted glass into shapes of animals and queens. The animals marched in a row around all his glass shelves. And the queens curtsied in the delicate party-dresses of the court.

All went well until in the middle of the night there occured a roar in the earth like a great iron train, and the earth split apart at the seam. Along with the rest of the village the glassblower's house crumbled and shattered. Here and there a tiny animal survived on a bed of soft dirt, or a courtly lady in a tuft of loose grass, but mostly the work of the glassblower had been destroyed.

Many months went by before the villagers recovered some of their lost things and began to fill in the crevice of earth and to live something like their old lives again.

The glassblower, too, gathered as many of his fine pieces as he could and built a new shelter for them and himself. But something strange happened as he again began to heat and blow the liquid glass. An element appeared. His glass was finer and more crystal-clear than ever before. Something had been added, or changed, or taken away.

His supplies! Had he scraped up something new when he collected his ingredients from the quake, or had something been lost that before had remained hidden and unknown? The glassblower didn't know. But for the time that those supplies lasted he created with them animals and fairy queens such as he had never even dreamed of before. They stood on the glass shelves as if they were to last forever, and those who saw them were sure they would. This wonder that they created provided them with protection from all who saw them, so that neither earthquake nor flood was ever again allowed to damage what the glassblower had made from the crack that had rendered its secrets from the earth.

POEM-PRAYER *Sister Claire Marie Wick*

Lord, now how can we show our fellowmen our Light
If the candle of our life won't even ignite?

And, Lord, how can we be your salt to give Christianity flavor
If the salt of our self has completely seemed to lose its savor?

Lord, what if the springs of our joy no longer seem a bubbling
What if our spirits, mind and heart, are greatly troubling?

Somehow I seem to hear you say ask-seek-knock for these answers
within Yourself from my heart.

Lord, do you really mean that Your Presence there, no matter what
makes me Your Counterpart?

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Date.....

I enclose $.....**in payment of a subscription to FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER for**.....**year(s), and $**.....**toward furthering the work. May God add His blessing! (All contributions are tax-deductible.)**

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LAST-MINUTE NEWS. As this issue goes to press, word has just arrived that Elizabeth G. Blake (Mrs. H. Kingsley Blake), of Scarsdale, New York, died suddenly of a heart-attack on June 5. Since 1950, Mrs. Blake had been deeply interested in Fellowship in Prayer and knew Carl and Emma Evans well. During the funeral service for our Founder, Mrs. Blake wrote a poem in his memory, which we published in the February 1956 issue. Her last check —written just prior to her death—was to the Fellowship. Deepest sympathy is extended to her husband.

NEW ADVISOR. It gives us much pleasure to announce that Georga Palmer Dishner (Mrs. Robert Dishner) has accepted our invitation to serve as an Advisor in the Southern Zone. Mrs. Dishner lives in the country about five miles from Johnson City, Tennessee, and is the mother of a son and daughter. She tells us she has been writing practically all of her life. "In fact," she says, "writing is the thing that keeps me going." She belongs to the Fossils, American Poetry Society, United Amateur Press, teaches an adult Sunday School class, and is an enthusiastic worker in her church circles. Mrs. Dishner has been a member of Fellowship in Prayer since 1966 and believes in its purpose. She recently initiated a Fellowship in Prayer group and writes: "We are a dedicated, eager prayer group, and hope to grow." With such dedication and high ideals, the Johnson City Prayer Group cannot help but succeed and grow from strength to strength.

COURSE IN PRAYER. Lesson 1 of Fellowship in Prayer's new Course in Prayer, by Francis Merchant, was mailed to members in July. (If you did not receive your copy, please let us know at once.) Lesson 2 will be mailed in September.

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THE HUMMINGBIRD

Elizabeth Twyeffort

Lord, besides fragile grace
Which you have given us
In such minute bodies,
We have other attributes.
We can hover in one place
By rapid beating of our wings.
But our special forte
Is to fly backwards at will.
Do we make other birds envious?
Yet we have one sorrow
They do not have.
We have no voice.
Someday may we too
Be heard praising you?